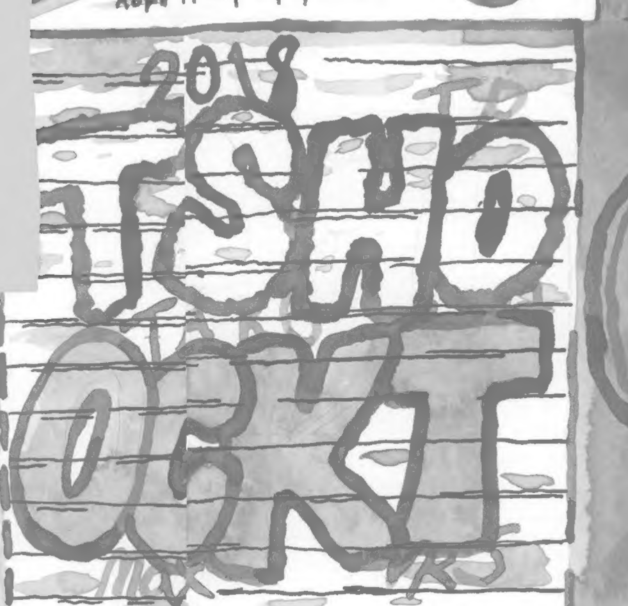
ADYE

care and struggle in athens' rebel neighborhood



Boont
Vulpes

Carved out with molotovs and heart, the Exarcheia neighborhood in Athens remains a beacon of fire for those fighting for a better world. In 2018, we visited ADYE located in Exarcheia Square. A self organized health clinic, ADYE is just one of the projects in the area standing against the state and capital while experimenting with other forms of life.

JP Press
New Orleans/Oakland
www.jppress.xyz
@jppressnola @jp-press

ADYE is living proof that self organization works and we try to prepare the ground for self organization at the same time we do not expect the "kingdom of self organization" to materialize.

But also we do this because we think this is a better way of living in the present.

Exarcheia, Athens' rebel neighborhood, has been fiercely defended by it's inhabitants from police and fascists since the fall of the dictatorship.

ACAB

DEAD TERFS

Haukur Hilmarsson (Sahin Hosseini)

Although quiet tonight, it doesn't feel dormant.

TOURIS

We sit in KVOX, a squat off Exarcheia square.

Over the past few years, KVOX has been at the center of a fight against drug dealers in the neighborhood.

In a place largely off limits to uniformed representatives of the state,

the police use mafia and the drug trade as a way to intimidate, infiltrate and undermine the anarchist movement.

We're here to learn about the autonomous health clinic run in the basement, at the heart of it all.

Do you think this model is scale-able?

Well, organizing on this scale is no problem, on a societal scale many things need to change.

Firstly, the relationship between patient and doctor needs to shift fundamentally. It must shift from a doctor-centered model to a patient-centered model, one.

This is very important, but we would not destroy the hospitals, but use them and organize them horizontally.

Working in the hospital, there is also a lot that can be taken from the institution...

materials and also knowledge... and brought back to ADYE.

We see this project as another way to engage with patients than in the institutions, in a more equal way.

We work on prevention and education to return patients health to their own hands.

And like everything, there's widespread corruption, everyone has access but if you have money or not makes a difference,
eventually you pay either way, for private care or with the black market.
Is this the clinic? I have a problem on my foot
Yes, of course, you can go down to see the doctor now
Until 2015, ADYE mostly served those born in Greece.
But in 2015 when many migrants arrived in Exarcheia, the neighborhood had to respond, and we were in a good position to respond first.
We established a team that treated hundreds of cases of respiratory issues, diarrhea, infections and newborns with no medical treatment.
This model was repeated later on in Idomeni, where we were able to provide a higher quality of care faster than the governments or NGOs.
We wanted to demonstrate two things, that we care about refugees and oppose fascist behavior, and to show that self organization works.
All practical issues are decided in the assembly. The structure is horizontal.
Decisions are made by consensus, 100% consensus if possible...
Or as close to this as possible!
Our meeting will begin now, if you would like to join
okay,
so who are you guys, can you tell us some things about yourselves.

Like what is your purpose for being here, do you want to learn some things from us?

or...

We want to know you don't work with the state, or an NGO or something like this.

uh-

We're from the US, we produce comics for that we distribute as propaganda.

We have made some about the situations migrants face in the Balkans, the history of the police, pipeline struggles, this kind of thing.

We currently are working on a comic about inspirational self-organized projects in Europe,

which is why we're here with you now.

...And we're definitely not associated with or take any money from the state or NGOs or anything

This all cost 6 to 7 thousand euros, luckily some connections we have with the anarchist federation in France has helped us out.

In September 2013, our clinic opened.

Our objective, is not to cover the deficit of the state, but to promote autogestion*.

*Often simply translated as "self-management", autogestion in contemporary European revolutionary circles more properly refers to an organizational model that favors autonomy, self organization and affinity.

With the failure of the movement of the squares, everyone went back to their neighborhoods to organize.

Meanwhile Syriza set up clinics that distinguished between those who had access to social security and those who did not.

They also refused to engage with the refugee crisis and dissolved in 2015, so they would not challenge the newly elected Syriza government.

ADYE, we, in contrast see ourselves as not simply closing the gaps left by the state.

Syrizas attempt to establish healthcare for all Greeks failed, conditions remain bad, months-long waiting lists, bad quality care etc.

In 2012, there was an assembly of anarchist collectives and squats called to combat state sponsored mafia and drug dealing intent on destroying Exarcheia.

The decision was made there to escalate the confrontation through social projects.

So a clinic and a grocery store was started.

The grocery store collapsed but the clinic remains.

We had some events in the square to raise money for rehabbing the space and building out the clinic. We needed to-

You can put those over here, thank you.

Thanks

We are collecting donations for the victims of the fires.

Anyway, we needed to bring the clinic up to health standards.

I looked at their stuff, it's not hipster, all political.

I like it.

Okay well great, you can come by tomorrow at 6:30pm, here, and we can show you our clinic.

Thanks.

Thank you!

Thanks!

Thanks!

So you can leave now, because we are going to switch to Greek.

Okay!

I assure you it will be very boring.

Thanks

Okay thanks!

The next day
6:00pm

Hey Babis!

Oh hey! I'm sorry, did you hear about this fire?

Ah yeah, we saw the sky and then saw it in the news, it's terrible.

26 dead, many animals too, it just moved so fast...

people leapt from the cliffs as the fire took everything.

We went with some donations, a few doctors and a counselor for psychological ailments.

Our clinic spent some time at Idomeni, but just the scale of the destruction from this... fire... it's different.

Come on, I will show you our clinic now.

Here's reception, this is where everyone enters and is checked in before they see the doctor.

We tell them the situation, that this building is squatted,

that we do this for free as an act of solidarity.

Waiting room, psychologists office,

doctors office fully equipped,

blood pressure, cardiology machine,

ultra sound, dentist office,

pharmacy with no opiates.

We have 6 doctors, 6 psychologists, 3 dentists, 1 pharmacist and 1 dental technician, with 25 people total on the assembly.

We serve maybe 10-12 people per shift, mostly for primary healthcare, pulmonary issues, blood pressure, inflammation, diabetes....

So how did all this start? It's incredible.